

MERCATOR:

OR,

Commerce Retrieved,

BEING

CONSIDERATIONS on the State of the *British* Trade, &c.

From Thursday, December 3. to Saturday, December 5. 1713.

*The Debate of the pretended Demands of Spain adjourned to the Treaty.**Those Things only started to amuse and divide the People.**The Notion of the French Influencing our Trade to Spain, entred upon.**A Letter to the Mercator.*

HAVING laid down the state of the Case, as to the Treaty of Commerce with Spain, which is now transacting abroad, and having detected the Attempt, which has been made to prepossess the People against it, right or wrong, before hand; it seems more proper to adjourn the full Examination of that Matter till the Treaty is finished and appears.

The Attempts to Insult the Treaty before it is done, will be best Exposed by the Treaty it self; then the proper Debates will be, not about what this or that Side may Demand, but what both Sides have Agreed and Concluded.

There is no question but that, in the mean time, every thing that can be cavill'd at, shall be cavill'd at; the Party stand ready Charg'd with Scandal, and cannot forbear throwing out some of it even before the thing is done; so eager to have it ill done, that they contrive Objections, and make Demands, for the King of Spain, which it is very likely neither his Catholick Majesty, or any of his Ministers, ever dream'd of.

On the other hand, had all these Demands been actually made by the Spaniards, what had it been to the Purpose, or of what Consequence had it been to the Nation? 'Tis the Granting or not Granting any extravagant Conditions, not the Demanding them, that will be the Question.

If the Party, that would make a Handle of these Demands, had look'd into the Treaty of the *Assiento* with the Spaniards, which is Printed, they would have seen one of their Demands made ridiculous by being otherwise determin'd already under the King of Spain's own Hand, and that we are not to Trade in New Spain under Covert, but openly, as Englishmen and Britains.

In all Treaties it has been usual, and indeed is absolutely necessary, that Demands are made on both sides, every Party set down what their own Interest guides them to ask, always leaving room for the necessary Abatements on every side, when they come to Treat more nearly of those things, as Justice and Equity, and the Nature and Circumstances of things require.

If we look back to the specific Demands made by the Dutch, the Emperor, and other Confederates, before the last Treaty of Peace, we shall find extravagant Demands made on all sides, even by those, who resolv'd, when they came to Treat, to talk another kind of Language.

If this is the Custom and Usage in such Case, what Use can any one make of the Demands of the differing Parties? and to what Purpose could those Demands said, though falsly, to have been made by the Spaniards, be made publick, except, as has been hinted, that the forged Demands were found necessary to introduce the scandalous Inference which followed, (viz.) That Her Majesty must be obliged to the French King to bring the King of Spain to comply.

But as, on the other hand, these Demands said to be so made, have no Foundation, but in the Invention of the People concern'd; what greater Testimony can there be given to the Truth and Justice of what the *MERCATOR* has publish'd, (viz.) That there is a Party visibly at work among the good People of this Nation, in order to deceive and divide them.

The Business of the *MERCATOR* is in Matters of Commerce, and he resolves, that this Paper shall have as little to do as possible in the unnatural Feuds of Parties, which are among us, and which are arriv'd at this time to such an amazing height, that People abandon the Rules of common Courtesy, and are, as it were, spitting in one another's Faces every day: He therefore leaves the Case of the Demands, &c. with this general Remark only; and leaves the farther Proof of the Falsity of these pretended Demands to be made out as the Treaty goes on, by which, what has been said here, and much more, will appear to be true.

In the mean time, it may be necessary to say something to the loud Noise, that has been made, That the French, by their Influence on the Spanish Affairs, would injure our Trade in Spain, would have the Preference in all the Spanish Ports, and being so near to them, would run in their own Manufactures in such Quantities, as would shut ours out, and so our Trade to Spain would be ruin'd by the French. This is what has been openly insisted on.

As to the French Influence on the Spanish Affairs, it is not an Argument to be discuss'd in the *MERCATOR*; perhaps it may be so, and perhaps not, as to Peace and War, Assistance and Politick Interest; and the *MERCATOR* says it is not to his purpose, nor is it the Business of this Paper at all to debate about it.

But as to the Influence of France over Matters of Trade in Spain; that, as the proper Work of the *MERCATOR*, shall be a little touch'd upon, as occasion offers.

By

By Influence of the French, must be understood giving some unjust Preferences to the Merchants or Merchandizes of that Nation, in prejudice of the English Trade. This must necessarily include all that can be understood by the Influence of the French upon the Spanish Trade.

This unjust Preference must be by Prohibitions or Impositions upon the one more than the other.

There are but Two Prohibitions practised in the whole Spanish Trade, as it respects us, (*viz.*) The Prohibition of Trading to the Spanish West-Indies, and the Prohibition of Exporting Bullion; and both these are General to all Nations in the World. The first of these was always strictly observed; this War excepted, and unless the Spaniards are worse than Distracted, will be so for ever hereafter. The second was always strictly enjoyn'd, but the execution Universally omitted, and must be so still, or else the Spaniards can never pay for a Tenth part of the Goods they buy.

Nay, the *MERCATOR* offers to make it appear, that should the Spaniards effectually keep their Silver at home, they must Trade very little with any part of the World but the English, for that no other Nation takes any considerable Quantity of their Native Goods off of their Hands; but of this more in the next *MERCATOR*. In the mean time let them Answer, if they can, the Contents of the following Letter; the Original is ready to be produced to prove it Genuine.

To the Mercator.

IF you were not Talking to People, that have face enough to run down any thing, that can bring Navigable Rivers over Mountains, that can make Horses swim and Boats fly, and face any one down, that there is as near a way out of France to Metz and Strasburgh by Water, as from Holland; I say, if you had not to deal with such Men as these, you might hope to Convince them; but you have taken a true way with them, (*viz.*) By a total Neglect of them, to let them beat the Air, and Talk to them, that will be Deceived by them; it is certainly the true way to deal with such People.

But that a little convincing Truth may be offered to them, I desire your Leave to propose a Query or two for them to Chew upon, drawn from Matter of Fact, which is as follows:

On the 31st of October last, was Entred at the Custom-house, by Mr. Paul Torin, 31091 l. Pepper for *Marseilles*: This Pepper was shipp'd on board the *Marseilles Factor*, James Brooks Commander, who was clear'd out the 21st of November following, not for *Marseilles*, but for the *Streights*. Now my Queries are these:

1. Was this Ship the *Marseilles Factor* bound to France, or no?

2. If not, what came of the Pepper, which was Entred for *Marseilles*?

3. If she was bound to *Marseilles*, did she lye here from the 31st of October to the 21st of November, and take in no Goods but that Pepper, or was she full Loaden for *Marseilles*?

In Answer to this, let these Merchants, because they boast of their being exact in their Enquiries, go to the Custom-house, and take an exact Account of all the Goods, which being Entred for the *Streights*, were shipped on board this Ship; and, upon this Evidence let the Weight of the Question lie, Whether it be not true, that vast Quantities of Goods are sent to France under the General Entries of the *Streights*, and other Places.

Lastly, If this be true, let them tell us, how can any Guess be made from the Custom-house Books of what the Trade to France is?

It is well known, the *Marseilles Factor* has been well loaden, the Cockets will give an Account of it; if these Men dare shew the Account, and are not ashamed, they may easily do it.

It is well known, great Quantities of those Goods were shipped by French Merchants, eminent for their Trade, and they may be enquired of. Pray entreat these Men, if they are not ashamed to do it, to print the Cargo of the *Marseilles Factor*, and let it stand for a Witness of the Knavery and Legerdemain, which they practise daily, in pretending to give us an Estimate of the French Trade from the Custom-house Entries, when it is plain, that of a whole Ship's Cargo, or greatest part of it, here was but one parcel of Goods honestly Entred to France, the rest shipped and all Entred to that strange many-harbour'd Port, called the *Streights*.

This Ship is hardly yet out of the River; the thing is within reach, within view; it is a fair Example, let them come to the Test, and let this be a Standard to judge of others by.

If but one Entry in a whole Ship's Freight be fairly made, pray how shall the Commissioners of the Customs give a fair Account of the Trade to France?

Indeed, Sir, till this is Answer'd, and that directly, not by Cavils and Raillery, no Man of Sense will mind a word they say.

It is true, that sometimes Ships may be bound farther, and may only touch at *Marseilles* to land what Goods they have for that Port, as a Waggoner in England takes in Goods for all the Towns in the Road; but it is also true, that *Marseilles* is up the Bay or Gulph of Lyons, and out of the way to Leghorn or Naples: And as a Carrier will not go out of his way to any Town, unless great part of his Waggon be loaded for that Town; so neither will a Ship go up to *Marseilles* for a small parcel of Pepper. But they may put us out of pain, by examining this Ship's Cargo at the Custom-house; and if they think this is too much against them, let them take any other Ship; you may Name them six or seven within this Month. And I take upon me to assure you of Two Things:

1. There has not One Thousand Pounds worth of Goods been Entred for any of the Ports of France in the Mediterranean, for these last Six Months.

2. There has above Fifty Thousand Pounds worth of Goods been really sent from London to the Ports of France in the Mediterranean, within that time. Let them search for this in the proper Offices at the Custom-house, and they will find it so.

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